

SSTRR02 Textile Sorting and Materials Recovery Operator

Disclaimer

These Occupational Frameworks and Skill Profiles have been developed as workforce planning, occupational mapping and skills reference resources for the Australian textile, clothing and footwear (TCF) industry. They are intended to describe the typical functions, responsibilities, skills and capabilities associated with occupations across the industry.

These documents are not intended to replace or override industrial instruments or employment arrangements, including awards, enterprise agreements, employment contracts, position descriptions, classification structures, licensing or regulatory requirements, or other statutory obligations. Where differences arise, the relevant industrial, legislative or regulatory requirements take precedence. The Skill Profiles should be used as complementary reference documents to support workforce planning, career development, training and skills recognition.

1. Job role

TCF sub-sector	Textile Recycling and Remanufacturing
Functional area	Textile Sorting and Materials Recovery
Job role	SSTRR02 Textile Sorting and Materials Recovery Operator
Job role description	Identifies, classifies and prepares post-consumer and post-industrial textile waste for recycling by assessing fibre composition, removing contaminants, separating materials and supporting quality assurance throughout the recovery process. The role recognises that accurate material identification is increasingly important as textile recycling technologies develop. Works with recycling operators, team leaders and quality personnel to maximise recovery, minimise contamination and ensure recovered materials meet downstream processing requirements.
Performance expectations	• Accurately identify and classify textile materials. • Maximise recovery while minimising contamination. • Prepare materials for efficient downstream recycling. • Maintain consistent material quality. • Achieve sorting and recovery targets. • Maintain traceability and production records. • Comply with WHS and environmental requirements.
Specialisation	Textile identification, fibre composition, sorting, grading, material separation, contamination control and materials recovery.
Application in other TCF sectors	Waste management, fibre recovery, plastics recycling, paper recycling, nonwoven manufacturing and resource recovery.

2. Key tasks and critical work functions

Key tasks	• Receive and inspect textile waste. • Identify fibres, fabrics and textile components.
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	- Sort and grade materials by fibre type, composition and condition. - Remove contaminants, trims, hardware and branded components. - Separate materials for appropriate recycling streams. - Support quality inspection and sampling. - Maintain production and traceability records. - Follow quality, WHS and environmental procedures.
Critical work functions	- Ensure accurate material identification. - Prevent contamination of recovery streams. - Prepare materials for downstream recycling. - Maintain material traceability. - Support efficient recovery operations. - Contribute to circular economy outcomes.

3. Technical skills

Material identification	Recognising textile fibres, fabrics, blends and components.
Sorting and grading	Classifying materials for recycling pathways.
Material separation	Separating materials by fibre composition and condition.
Quality assurance	Inspecting recovered materials against specifications.
Contamination control	Removing non-textile materials and contaminants.
Data recording	Maintaining recovery and traceability records.
Equipment operation	Using sorting aids and basic recovery equipment.
Safety practices	Applying WHS and environmental procedures.

4. Generic Skills

Attention to detail	Accurately identifying and classifying materials.
Observation skills	Recognising fibre characteristics and contaminants.
Communication	Working effectively with team members and supervisors.
Problem solving	Resolving material identification issues.
Teamwork	Supporting integrated recycling operations.
Time management	Maintaining sorting throughput.
Adaptability	Responding to changing material inputs.
Reliability	Maintaining consistent quality standards.

5. Emerging skills

Emerging skills	- AI-assisted material identification. - Automated optical sorting technologies.
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	• Digital material traceability. • Advanced fibre identification methods. • Data-driven quality monitoring. • Circular economy material classification.
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6. VET Qualifications and Skill Sets

Entry-level preparation	MSM20216 Certificate II in Manufacturing Technology or equivalent.
Advanced development	MSA30208 Certificate III in Manufacturing Technology or equivalent.

7. Job progression

Possible job progression	Sorting Assistant → Textile Sorting and Materials Recovery Operator → Senior Operator → Textile Recycling Team Leader → Production Manager.
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8. Classification

Australian Qualifications Framework	Level 2.
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Skill Levels	Skill Level 5.
Open Source Classification of Occupations for Australia (OSCA)	839133 Fabric and Textile Factory worker.



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